

BOOKS OF THE WEEK SEEN IN REVIEW AND COMMENT

CRITICAL REVIEWS
OF THE SEASON'S
LATEST BOOKSConingsby Dawson's New Novel Presents for Inspection
Some Modern Sirens—"Richard Richard."Mr. Merwin Tells a Tale of Bohemianism—The Story
of a Hero in a Garden—Other Books.**SLAVES OF FREEDOM.** (Henry Holt & Co.) By Coningsby Dawson. (\$1.40.)Ostensibly in *Slaves of Freedom* (Henry Holt & Co.) Coningsby Dawson is dissecting and holding up for inspection a type of woman whom he deems modern, the siren who draws men on without giving any part of herself in return, and he presents three speci-

mens of the species. He seems much more interested, however, in the amateur musings of a rather self-satisfied literary youth inclined to dream and not to act. We meet him as a precocious child in eccentric surroundings, which we suppose are meant to be bohemian. He is coddled by a beautiful woman, a singer, falls in love with her, and saves up his money in order to be able to marry. The child's disappointment when he discovers that he is not taken seriously is pathetic. The woman wishes to be free and will not marry the man who loves her, though she has borne him a daughter. The girl is a capricious imp, who fascinates the boy when they meet and makes him dance to her fancy. The children's love affair is very pretty, but their part and the story jumps over several years so as to enable them to grow up. The youth has become a successful author when he runs across the girl in an Arthurian pageant at Glastonbury; they have an all night motor ride together, he treating her as his ideal and she snubbing him. She flees to America, where she hopes to become an actress, and suggests that he follow her there. He does this and she keeps him at arm's length, but while he is philosophizing and she is blowing hot and cold, the author takes the opportunity to record impressions of various phases of New York life. By this time the girl, her still beautiful mother, and the selfish actress whom the girl admires, all have lovers dancing about them and play with them in the same way. They and their lovers act like psychological puppets, though more than it seems as if the girl could be won. If the youth would only show real passion and not stand back to analyze himself and her, he gives her up at last, but after an interval the girl hunts him up again and proposes a platonic honeymoon in France to find out whether she really loves him. After a very short trial she runs away from him, for which women will not blame her, we feel sure, and after a vain chase he finds that he no longer loves her. It speaks well for Mr. Dawson's art that the reader does not weary of the pursuit long before the young man does, for his methods of love making and of thought are monotonously unchanging; he should have provided



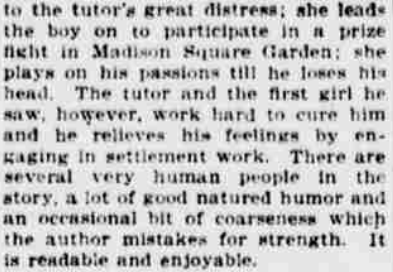
RICHARD RICHARD, (The Penn Publishing Company, Philadelphia.) (\$1.35.)

some other ending than his hero's impotent rage at being abandoned.

RICHARD RICHARD. (The Penn Publishing Company, Philadelphia.) (\$1.35.)There is much that is entertaining with a good deal that is in bad taste in Hughes Mearns's *Richard Richard* (The Penn Publishing Company). It opens with a decidedly unconventional but amusing day in Naples that a young man and woman spend together without having been introduced. Though the girl acts like a daredevil she behaves conventionally enough ever after. Then comes an ocean voyage in which the struggles with a dyspnoic, swinging from insanity to imbecility, are offset by conversations on philosophical topics with a level headed business woman. The scene then shifts to Penn Yan and Lake Keuka, where it appears that the business woman has been as per- versely obstinate in muddling her affairs as her drunkard son in pursuing his course. The Naples youth undertakes to cure the son, to put the old lady's affairs in order and to marry the girl. He is aided by an eccentric and outspoken Irishman with red hair, who is injected into the story. There is much psychopathological discussion, some swimming and a boat race before the author is ready to end. He chooses to leave his hero without a name. It is an incoherent sort of a story in which there are many bits that are bright and amusing, particularly the philosophical bantering, some parts that seem childish and some that are very disagreeable, even if the author seems to enjoy them. Realistic descriptions of delirium tremens surely have no place in light fiction.**THE TRUFFERS.** (The Bobbs-Merrill Company.) By Samuel Merwin. (\$1.35.)The title of Samuel Merwin's *The Truffers* (The Bobbs-Merrill Company) needs explanation. His hero, an egotistical playwright whom Mr. Merwin takes delight in flaying, discovers, in one of Henri Ford's books, the description of an insect that hunts

for truffles, invents the word and applies it to the independent young women who are in search of pleasure, though it fits him better than any one else. He is absolutely unscrupulous in anything that affects his own interests. The scene is the Greenwich village of fiction, the abode of all mis-understood geniuses, of the devilish New York bohemia, and of the herd of young people seeking to put into practice their half baked theories about art and literature and morals and life and to flaunt the conventions. The central figure is an earnest young woman imbued with all the modern notions and ready to carry them to any extreme; she is protected, however, by some remnants of conscience, by the decency of most of the men around her, who recognize the honesty of her character, and by the watchfulness of one prosaic admirer who helps her out at all critical moments. The reader's interest is in what will become of her, for he will soon see through the satire about the contemptible dramatist.

The author writes with unusual directness; he gives the arguments for and against the modern independence of woman; he describes many familiar and many not so well known bits of New York; the author is a graphic picture of the village legend; he paints some picturesque figures, male and female; above all he writes amusingly at many things, and presents us with a girl that can be linked through all her blunders and a lover that is wholly satisfactory. It is a graphic picture of a New York that many people outside of the city and some youthful persons in it believe to exist, the bohemian New York of expectant young writers and artists and especially of young women, with its lack of the gaiety and lightheartedness of the Parisian bohemia of fiction. The young people are as serious minded in their fights for truth and against convention as the philistines they abhor. It is an extremely entertaining book, which would be particularly to New Yorkers and which would be more amusing if the author's serious purpose were less evident.

PARADISE GARDEN. (Appletons.) By George Gibbs. (\$1.35.)It is an amusing idea to transfer the medieval story of the youth brought up in ignorance of woman's existence into the twentieth century as George Gibbs has done in *Paradise Garden* (Appletons). He lives contentedly in a walled park up the Hudson with his misogynist tutor, who tells the story, till just before the time set for his liberation by his father's will. Then a young woman breaks into the garden and sets the young man thinking. So far the story is told with the requisite lightness of touch, and the scenes between the young people are delightfully funny. On coming of age the youth with his great wealth and great ignorance of life is let loose in New York. He soon falls into the hands of a young woman of the prevailing type in fiction, the evil minded flirt who demands everything of men and will grant nothing. She leads him a dance

MARGARET SHERWOOD, (The Bobbs-Merrill Company.) (\$1.35.)

to the tutor's great distress; she leads the boy on to participate in a prize fight in Madison Square Garden; she plays on his passions till he loses his head. The tutor and the first girl he saw, however, work hard to cure him and he relieves his feelings by engaging in settlement work. There are several very human people in the story, a lot of good natured humor and an occasional bit of coarseness which the author mistakes for strength. It is readable and enjoyable.

WATERMEADS. (Dodd, Mead & Co.) By Archibald Marshall. (\$1.50.)The simple troubles of an amiable English county family engage the reader's attention in Archibald Marshall's *Watermeads* (Dodd, Mead & Co.). They are impoverished, but none of them, save the mother, care for money; when need presses the father sells a family portrait. The son falls in love and becomes engaged to a rich girl with social ambitions. She visits the family, is disappointed with what she sees and plans to jilt her lover and make a better match. The author describes her maneuvers till she brazenly attaches to herself the son of a newly made peer, who had shown attention to her lover's sister, and throws overboard the man she is engaged to. There is a much more desirable maiden at hand, however, to console him and worthy young men to make up to his two attractive marriageable sisters. The family finances are also patched up and all are made happy. The humor is supplied by a pert little girl and by long speeches from the discontented mother which soon become tedious. The author writes pleasantly, so that it is possible to enjoy his somewhat artless tale

ing. She had studied to be a musician and her intimate acquaintance with the details, knowledge of musical training, appreciation of the musical temperament and knowledge of the hardships and rewards of a musical career are all to be seen through the portrait and experience of the violinist hero of "Just David."

Now Mrs. Porter devotes all her energy and time, aside from what is demanded by home duties, to writing. She keeps regular working hours each morning and in summer works in a sunny spot tucked up on the roof of her home—surely a cheerful place to be "glad" in.

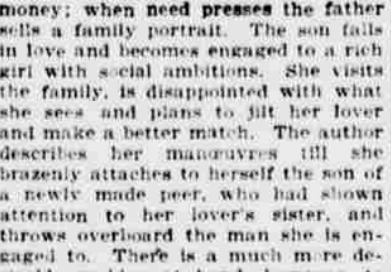
She tells that some time ago she was a little annoyed when an interviewer asked what is her favorite attitude when working. As a matter of fact Mrs. Porter works best when curled up on a window seat or couch or hammock, her feet tucked under her, but this she did not reveal. Since, however, a friend has told her that some psychologists have a theory that when people "sit on their feet" there is some sort of definite mental impulse and result, she has been so perturbed by the query may have been scientifically pertinent after all. But Mrs. Porter could not explain the theory, and "Just David" but he who also sits on his feet sometimes, had never heard of it, so that point cannot be here elucidated. Perhaps it has something to do with optimism.

Mrs. Porter's new novel, which is already completed, is going to be in a vein entirely different from "Pollyanna" or "Just David," but he who also sits on his feet sometimes, had never heard of it, so that point cannot be here elucidated. Perhaps it has something to do with optimism.

"O. HENRY DAY" TO BE CELEBRATED NEXT WEEK

Anticipating the announced publication of the official, authorized O. Henry Biography, by C. Alphonso Smith, Editor Allan Poe professor of English at the University of Virginia, Doubleday Page & Co. have issued invitations for the afternoon of October 24 at Chickering Hall (the Lord & Taylor store) for O. Henry day. Prof. Smith is coming from his Virginia home for the celebration and will deliver the general address, taking up O. Henry's life and work.

It is now more than six years since O. Henry's death, and in that time the O. Henry legend, with its clouds of mystery and gossip has grown to considerable proportions. The biography which is authorized by the family of the late Sidney Porter reveals for the first time some of the details of his life around which so many romantic stories have clustered. The real story of O. Henry's life is perhaps more interesting and romantic than any of the fiction tales which he wrote, and for the first time now the public has an opportunity of knowing facts which will only tend to increase the admiration for the man and his work.

On October 31, a week following the O. Henry day, Mr. H. Kerfoot, literary editor of *Life* for many years, will begin a series of lectures upon American literature, which will be given each week.On October 31, a week following the O. Henry day, Mr. H. Kerfoot, literary editor of *Life* for many years, will begin a series of lectures upon American literature, which will be given each week.On October 31, a week following the O. Henry day, Mr. H. Kerfoot, literary editor of *Life* for many years, will begin a series of lectures upon American literature, which will be given each week.

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